

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 DODE-00 PA-01
ICA-11 /065 W
-----025740 051251Z /43

R 051217Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4264
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 LENINGRAD 01361

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECON, CGEN, PINT, UR
SUBJECT: VISIT TO APATITE PLANT NEAR MURMANSK

REF: LENINGRAD 01335

1. SUMMARY: ON FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO MURMANSK (APRIL 24-27) CONSUL GENERAL, ACCCOMPANIED BY VICE CONSUL CARLSON AND RESPECTIVE WIVES, WAS GIVEN PERMISSION TO VISIT APATITY, SITE OF NEW PHOSPHATE CONCENTRATE PLANT. BRIEF VISIT CONFIRMED VERY USEFUL TELECON REPORT FROM EMBASSY MOSCOW THAT APATITY HAS VIRTUAL MONOPOLY ON CONCENTRATE PRODUCTION IN USSR, AND IT ALSO PROVIDED INSIGHTS INTO OPTIMISTIC FRONTIER ATMOSPHERE OF NEW INDUSTRIAL CENTER. END SUMMARY.

2. SIX-HOUR TRAIN RIDE ON APRIL 26 TO AND FROM APATITY ALLOWED ONLY RELATIVELY BRIEF TIME FOR VISIT WITH CITY'S MAYOR BESSMERTNYY (WHO, IN ADDITION TO BEING MINING ENGINEER, HAS FILM-STAR LOOKS AND PERSONALITY), FOLLOWED BY LUNCHEON GIVEN BY MAYOR AND HOUR VISIT TO CONCENTRATE PLANT ANOF-2. BESSMERTNYY USED TO WORK AT PLANT UNDER PRESENT DIRECTOR GARBUNOV. BOTH MEN EXUDDED FRONTIER PRIDE OF ACHIEVEMENT AS THEY DESCRIBED:

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-- APATITY'S GROWTH TO 63,000 TODAY (47,000 IN 1976)
SINCE IT WAS INCORPORATED IN 1966. IT NOW DWARFS KIROVSK (35,000 PERSONS) WHICH HAS BEEN MAJOR MINING SITE FOR APATITE SINCE 1930'S.

-- APATITY HAS VIRTUAL "MONOPOLY," BESSMERTNYY SAID,

PRODUCING 80 PERCENT OF USSR'S APATITE, OF WHICH 20 PERCENT IS EXPORTED TO SCANDINAVIA AND WESTERN EUROPE.

-- ORE USED TO RUN AS HIGH AS 26 PERCENT APATITE BUT PRESENT AVERAGE IS 15.5 TO 16 PERCENT.

-- WHILE AVOIDING GIVING ANY FIGURE ON RESERVES, BESSMERTNYY SAID THEY WERE SUFFICIENT FOR YEARS, BUT HE FORESAW DAY WHEN PROCESSING METHODS WILL MAKE CONCENTRATION OF 4 TO 6 PERCENT ORE PROFITABLE.

-- ANOF-2, AN ENORMOUS CONCENTRATE PLANT 700 METERS LONG, PRODUCES AROUND 32,000 TONS OF CONCENTRATE DAILY OR 11.5 MILLION TONS PER ANNUM (PLANT DIRECTOR'S FIGURES).

-- QUALITATIVELY, THE CONCENTRATION OF 39.5 PERCENT IS THE HIGHEST IN THE WORLD (DIRECTOR CLAIMED IT IS 38 PERCENT IN FLORIDA).

-- GARBUNOV BOASTED THAT MACHINERY (WITH EXCEPTION OF SOME GDR EQUIPMENT) WAS ENTIRELY SOVIET, WITH A NEW GIANT CRUSHER NOW BEING INSTALLED, HAVING BEEN DESIGNED BY DIRECTOR OF THE MINING CONGLOMERATE. MILLING EQUIPMENT (MELNITSY) MUST BE CHANGED EVERY THREE MONTHS. BESSMERTNYY SPOKE HIGHLY, HOWEVER, OF MICHIGAN AND CATERPILLAR VEHICLES IN USE.

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-- AVERAGE WAGES RUN 380-400 RUBLES IN APATITY AND APPARENTLY EVEN HIGHER IN KIROVSK BECAUSE MINERS GET SPECIAL HARSHSHIP BONUS. AS RESULT HIGH WAGES, DEMAND FOR AUTOMOBILES IN APATITY OUTRUNS SUPPLY AND PLANT DIRECTOR IS BLAMED. WOMEN WORKING EVEN IN HIGHLY AUTOMATIZED CONTROL ROOMS AT ANOF-2 ARE ELIGIBLE TO RETIRE AT 45.

-- AFTER SEPARATING APATITE, REMAINING ORE IS DUMPED BEHIND BARRIER IN ONE CORNER OF LAKE IMANDRAS STOREHOUSE OF VARIOUS MINERALS, INCLUDING TITANIUM, FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE EXPLOITATION; SOME POLLUTION OF LAKE HAS RESULTED.

-- ORE CONTAINS NEPHALINE WHICH IS ALSO PROCESSED BUT ON LIMITED BASIS SINCE THERE IS NO GREAT DEMAND. FIGURE GIVEN WAS ONE MILLION TONS A YEAR.

-- APATITY CONTAINS SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH BRANCH OF ACADEMY OF SCIENCES ("OUR ACADEMIC CITY") AND TWO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WHICH SUPPLY MOST OF 600 TO 800-ODD EMPLOYEES JOINING ANOF-2 EACH YEAR.

-- BESSMERTNYY CLAIMED THAT POPULATION IS QUITE STABLE

AND CHILDREN (INCLUDING HIS OWN TWO DAUGHTERS) SEEK TO RETURN THERE AFTER UNIVERSITY. THIS IS CREDIBLE. IN ADDITION TO PRESENCE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND RELATIVELY CLEAN, ATTRACTIVE ATMOSPHERE, PLANTS ARE BEING DEVELOPED TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS (E.G., BEER, MILK PLANTS NEXT YEAR); ACCOMPANYING MEMBER MURMANSK CITY GOVERNMENT CONFIRMED CLAIMS THAT PRE-FAB "PANEL" CONSTRUCTION PLANT IS BEST IN OBLAST AND THAT MURMANSK TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY RECENTLY TO BUY MEAT FROM APATITY AREA, WHICH HAD EVEN PRE-WAR REPUTATION FOR CATTLE (CG PARTY WAS SERVED FAIR VEAL AT LUNCH). SINCE INTERNATIONAL SLALOM COMPETITION

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JUST ENDED AT NEIGHBORING KIROVSK SKI "RESORT," IT IS EVIDENT REGION HAS MORE TO OFFER THAN MINING. BUCHANAN

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